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ABSTRACT

Although many school districts eagerly embrace site-based management to resolve some fundamental problems facing education, it is wise to consider what effects this decentralization can realistically have. Since procedures vary from school to school, the literature cannot yet furnish guidelines for ensuring a particular program's success. To help educators comprehend the implications of decentralized management, this publication provides a definition and rationale for school-based management, discusses its relationship to educational reform, and outlines variations in programs, including changes to be expected at various organizational levels. Also explained are major obstacles to site-based management programs, such as adaptation to changing roles and relationships, unclear differentiation of authority, unrealistic expectations, lack of training, insufficient superintendent or school board support, inadequate resources, and lack of participation. The success of site-based management implementation efforts depends on a school's internal context or culture. Despite the high expectations for site-based management, few hard data exist concerning its actual impact on students and teachers or its program costs and benefits. Districts also experience great difficulty in balancing school autonomy with centralized assessment of process and outcomes. More experimentation, research, and time are needed before the real potential of site-base management can be determined. (7 references) (MLH)

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